

**Labor and Public Employees Committee Hearing
Tuesday, March 15th, 2022**

**Testimony in Support of Raised Senate Bill No. 422, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESSENTIAL
WORKERS COVID-19 ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**Marilyn E. Rossetti
President and CEO
The Open Hearth Association**

Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee thank you for hearing my testimony today in support of Raised Senate Bill No. 422, An Act Concerning the Essential Workers COVID-19 Assistance Program. My name is **Marilyn E. Rossetti**, and I work in **Hartford** and am a resident of **Hartford, CT**.

- Frontline workers, including those that support homeless shelters, have been critical in combating the spread of the COVID virus and helping to keep our CT communities healthy and safe. We are asking for legislative action to include homeless response workers in the Connecticut Essential Workers COVID-19 Assistance Program – we saved thousands of lives in the last two years.
-
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, these essential workers have stepped up to a new challenge, working on the frontlines of the emergency response to care for those most vulnerable to the virus. Whether coordinating testing and vaccines, providing shelter services, isolation, and quarantine space, or moving people into housing, the contributions of the frontline staff in the homeless response system have been vital and essential. We also know that frontline staff and those fulfilling essential roles throughout the pandemic are disproportionately people of color.

I personally witnessed day in day out the staff I work with at The Open Hearth giving their all, never complaining, and thinking of the client's needs first. Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to present this testimony, and for your hard work making important and life-saving decisions as we look to shape Connecticut's future beyond the pandemic. Now is the time to recognize homeless response workers who put their lives on the line to save the lives of their clients.

Sincerely,
Marilyn E. Rossetti
President and CEO
The Open Hearth Association
mrossetti@theopenhearth.org